

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge that the personal agent 11 of Stevens communicates with a host computer or with the professional unit 9, 101. Applicants further acknowledge that the professional unit 9, 101 communicates with the host computer or with the personal agent 11. Applicants further acknowledge that scanner 16 of Maggard communicates with a host computer.

However, neither Stevens, nor Maggard, either alone or in combination, discloses the “forward-and-relay” feature recited in the claims. More specifically, applicants’ first reader produces first symbol data which is “forwarded” to applicants’ second reader. Thereupon, applicants’ second reader “relays” the first symbol data to the host computer.

In other words, the data produced by a first reader is not sent directly to the host computer, but instead, is sent indirectly to the host computer via the second reader. The second reader thus acts as a “middleman”.

The applied art does not disclose a reader which acts as an intermediary for another reader. Although it is acknowledged that the personal agent 11 and the professional unit 9, 101 communicate with each other, this does not mean that the professional unit will relay the data read by the personal agent.

Applicants’ invention has particular utility when the first reader is out of range with the host computer and thus cannot directly transfer data thereto. In such an event, the first reader will communicate with another reader that is within range and, then, the second reader will complete the task of transmitting the data to the host computer.

Wherefore, a favorable action is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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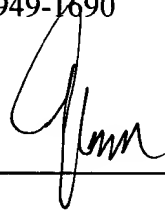
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